



TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE HUMAN-CENTERED APPROACH FOR NEW CHALLENGES IN THE WORLD OF WORK

G7 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting in Cagliari

12-13 September 2024

Ministerial Declaration

1. We, G7 Labour and Employment Ministers and the EU Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights met in Cagliari on 12 and 13 September 2024, together with the Director-General of the ILO, the Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs of the OECD, and representatives of the social partners and engagement groups to reaffirm the need for a human-centered approach in seizing the opportunities and addressing the risks to the world of work.

2. We reiterate in the strongest terms our condemnation of Russia's ongoing illegal, unjustifiable, and unprovoked full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, which continues impacting on food and energy security and prices worldwide to the detriment especially of the most vulnerable in our societies. We reaffirm our strongest condemnation of the brutal terrorist attacks conducted by Hamas and other terrorist groups against Israel on 7 October 2023. We remain deeply concerned for the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and, recalling the UN Security Council Resolution 2735, we urge for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, and a sustained increase in humanitarian assistance.

Human-centered development and use of Artificial Intelligence in the world of work

3. We acknowledge that technologies based on safe, secure and trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (AI), including generative AI, can increase labour

productivity, improve working conditions and occupational safety and health in the workplaces, empower workers and create quality employment opportunities, including for persons with disabilities, enhance the effectiveness of labour market and training policies, and address labour shortages. Furthermore, AI can serve as an enabler for entrepreneurship, empowering individuals to leverage advanced technologies to develop and scale innovative projects.

4. We underline that the benefits of AI in the world of work can only be maximized and fairly distributed across the entire population when human rights and social inclusion are at the forefront, empowering workers. Realising the full potential of AI technologies requires well targeted public and private investments, including in AI infrastructure, reskilling and upskilling as well as education.

5. In order to fully benefit from the opportunities that AI offers, we need to continue to reconcile technological development with the protection of labour rights and minimise possible risks for the world of work, and especially for people in vulnerable and marginalised situations. These risks include increasing inequalities and discriminations, a negative impact on occupational safety and health, including mental health, weakened workers' representation and collective bargaining power, the misuse of digital surveillance of workers, as well as threats to privacy and accountability in the world of work. We highlight that social dialogue and collective bargaining can help to ensure the safe, secure and trustworthy adoption of AI in the world of work.

6. We will build upon the outcomes of the Hiroshima AI Process, the Global Partnership on AI, the 2024 revision of the OECD Recommendation on AI (OECD AI Principles), and the UN General Assembly resolution on "Seizing the Opportunities of Safe, Secure and Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence Systems for Sustainable Development". We will work towards a human-centered and socially responsible AI by ensuring decent work and reskilling opportunities for all workers, including those displaced by AI.

7. We agree on the *G7 Action Plan for a human-centered adoption of safe, secure and trustworthy AI in the World of Work* (annex 1). We will work to advance the G7 Action Plan in close cooperation with the private sector, workers' organisations, civil society, academia and other stakeholders. We ask the ILO and OECD to support us and to report back on our progress to the G7.

8. We welcome the initiatives of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence on the future of work to foster international cooperation. In taking note of the report of the UN Secretary General Tech Envoy and the ILO *Mind the AI divide. Shaping a Global Perspective on the Future of Work*, we acknowledge the value of international cooperation initiatives to address the digital divides that could widen global inequalities, including gender inequalities, with a special focus on developing countries and emerging economies. We further emphasize the importance of ensuring the protection of the fundamental principles and rights at work for AI supply chain workers within and outside of our countries, including those that review and refine data inputs used to train AI systems.

Resilient labour markets in ageing societies

9. In the G7 countries the share of older people will rapidly increase in the coming decades. An ageing population is rapidly becoming one of the drivers of labour shortages in key economic sectors in many G7 countries and it poses several challenges, such as the sustainability of social protection, including social security systems, intergenerational fairness, more people in need of care, and additional pressure on the care sector.

10. To address these challenges, we will continue to support active and healthy ageing, including by fostering quality job and lifelong learning opportunities at all ages, attracting and better retaining older workers, promoting greater flexibility in career pathways and by addressing discrimination based on age in the workplace, including through social dialogue at all levels. We will also work to overcome structural barriers to labour market participation and activate the untapped potential of the underemployed and the inactive, including older

workers, persons with disabilities, those with long term health conditions, young people and women. We will foster opportunities for labour mobility and, in line with the Agenda 2030, ensure that the migration of skilled workers is regular, safe and controlled and in alignment with international fair recruitment guidelines and labour standards.

11. We recognise the invaluable contribution of health and care sector workers in protecting our populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. We acknowledge that access to high-quality and affordable care services are critical to our countries' economic growth and social cohesion. In particular, we note that strengthening the care workforce and promoting decent work in the care economy will be key in ensuring adequate support for an active and dignified life for older people and persons with disabilities. In cooperation with social partners, we will strengthen our efforts to address persistent workforce challenges in the care sector; for instance, this can include labour shortages, poor working conditions, misclassification, informal work and unpaid care work, low wages, insufficient access to training, exposure to all forms of violence and harassment, gender gaps in paid and unpaid care work, while promoting and supporting collective bargaining. We will pursue the *G7 policy principles for a resilient world of work in ageing societies and Action Plan for improving working conditions in the care sector* to retain and attract a diverse and qualified workforce (annex 2).

Responsive, flexible and inclusive skills and lifelong learning policies and systems

12. Population ageing, the acceleration in the adoption of new technologies, including AI, and the transition towards a net-zero economy are changing the demand for skills, including in green jobs, advancements in AI in the workplace and quality employment growth in the care sector. But they are also contributing to labour shortages and skills mismatches across sectors and occupations in G7 countries and beyond. The participation of adults in lifelong learning should continue to improve, while gender and ageist stereotypes influence options and choices in education and training in certain fields of study, especially in some technical and vocational STEM domains, such as Engineering Trades and

Information and Communication Technologies in the case of women and girls and digital skills in the case of older workers.

13. To support demographic, digital and green transitions and strengthen the strategic competitiveness and labour productivity of our economies, we commit to continue addressing labour shortages and skill mismatches. We will also continue working closely with social partners to improve our own skill anticipation systems, adapt training curricula, provide career development services, including career guidance, support quality apprenticeships in line with *ILO Quality Apprenticeship Recommendation* and the *OECD Skills Strategy*, and provide workers, entrepreneurs and jobseekers with adequate foundational soft and technical skills for inclusive transitions and decent work. In doing this, we will promote gender equality and social inclusion, while addressing ageist stereotypes.

14. We will work to strengthen our efforts towards inclusive skills and lifelong learning policies and systems that facilitate access to high-quality job opportunities for all, improve workers' engagement, and contribute to addressing labour shortages, skill mismatches, inequalities and gender segregation and discrimination in the labour market. In doing so, we will continue working for future-ready, flexible skills and lifelong learning systems that are inclusive with respect to age, education, disability and gender. Furthermore, we will strengthen investment in human capital, broaden the talent pool and ensure just digital, green and demographic transitions. We aim to strengthen the role of the Social and Solidarity Economy in promoting the development of skills, especially of vulnerable groups, for inclusive societies.

Advancing inclusive labour markets and safe and healthy working environments

15. Recalling the Elmau G7 Leaders' Communiqué (2022), we renew our commitment to removing the obstacles that women in all their diversity face in entering, remaining and advancing in the labour market, closing the gender pay

and employment gap, addressing gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work and promoting better work-life balance for all workers, especially women. We will raise awareness of women's health in the workplace. We will strengthen our efforts to promote equal access to quality, safe, accessible, and inclusive education, digital literacy and technical and vocational education and training for women and girls, including in emerging and developing countries. We will work to ensure a gender transformative, and safe, secure and trustworthy development and use of AI and other technologies in the labour markets and institutions that contribute to closing gender gaps.

16. We reaffirm our commitment to pay particular attention to advancing disability inclusion. To address the persisting barriers to employment faced by persons with disabilities, we will strengthen our efforts to mainstream disability considerations in policy, programming, and legal frameworks, recalling the lessons learned from the OECD study *Disability, Work and Inclusion Mainstreaming in All Policies and Practices*. Recalling the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we recognize the necessity of using a disability inclusive lens when assessing the risks and benefits of AI for the future of work.

17. As the G7, we have a key role in advancing job quality and decent work as well as the fundamental principles and rights at work at the global level, including the right to a safe and healthy working environment. In close cooperation with social partners, we will continue to address occupational safety and health risks, including those associated with the adoption of AI in the world of work and those related to the impact of climate change on workers and employers. We will support initiatives to make safety practices and guidelines accessible and usable, and to promote awareness of occupational safety and health in the workplace.

18. We will seek to leverage AI technology to enhance and benefit workplace safety and well-being. We will promote transparency on the use of AI based technologies in order to improve risk assessment and strengthen preventive measures.

Way forward

19. We support the ILO Global Coalition for Social Justice in efforts to accelerate progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, we will continue to support initiatives that ensure full respect of international labour standards and human rights to promote fair and non-exploitative working conditions along global value chains, including the AI global value chain and intensify our efforts to abolish all forms of forced and compulsory labour and child labour. We reaffirm our commitment to improving occupational safety and health (OSH) in global value chains including by supporting the Vision Zero Fund in its work. We will continue to support a global level playing field on business and human rights and remain ready to explore ideas and options for a consensus-based legally binding instrument at the international level that adds value to the existing legal and policy approaches and is implementable.

20. We also support initiatives for restoring peace and helping reconstruction and recovery in conflict and crisis areas aimed at promoting fundamental principles and rights at work and the application of international labour standards, including through social dialogue.

21. We highlight the key contribution that social dialogue makes in addressing current and future challenges to our labour market. We value the Business 7 and Labour 7 contribution to our discussions and to the work of the G7 Employment Working Group. We are aware that adopting a human-centered approach for new challenges in the world of work requires continued dialogue and consultation, including with civil society organisations. We appreciate the contributions of Women 7, Youth 7 and Civil 7 to our exchanges. We acknowledge the contribution employment services make in facilitating an inclusive and just transition and encourage the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES) G7 Working Group to continue exploring innovative solutions to complement the work of the G7 Labour and Employment

Ministers and facilitating global collaboration and knowledge sharing among PES.

22. We recall the 2022 Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration's commitment to promote continuity and prioritize coordinated action across the G7 on critical labour, social and employment issues, through the G7 Employment Working Group.



Annex 1

G7 Action Plan for a human-centered development and use of safe, secure and trustworthy AI in the World of Work

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a transformative technology that holds the potential to significantly alter work and the lives of workers. The adoption of a human-centered, socially responsible, safe, secure, and trustworthy AI in the world of work can bring significant benefits in terms of employment opportunities, improved labour productivity, management processes, safety and health, fairness, and job quality. AI can positively augment work by replacing and automating repetitive tasks or assisting with routine activities and decisions, which may reduce the burden on workers and allow them to better perform other responsibilities. It can address labour shortages and improve labour market matching in the context of ageing societies and shrinking workforces. It can also enhance active labour market policies and improve the provision of training and employment services and strengthen the capacity of labour inspectorates.

2. At the same time, there are risks that come with the adoption of AI in the world of work. Unequal access to and use of AI in labour markets could lead to increased disparities among firms and workers, within and across countries. To maximise the benefits of AI in labour markets and to safeguard workers' rights, it is necessary to address the risks it raises by ceasing, preventing or mitigating adverse impacts. Despite limited evidence of a net negative impact on aggregate employment levels so far, many jobs will be transformed by AI, however gender disparities and other asymmetries could be expected with some sectors and regions to be more affected. There are also concerns that the adoption of AI in the labour market and workplaces could increase work intensity, mental distress, and reduce agency in managerial decisions including in hiring, evaluation and dismissal, and concerns in relation to fair remuneration. There are also potential

risks of undermining social dialogue, collective bargaining and other fundamental principles and rights at work, including freedom of association, non-discrimination in the world of work, and a safe and healthy working environment. As AI continues to evolve, it is also necessary to prioritise the inclusion of groups that are disadvantaged in the labour market, as well as ensure fairness, data protection, privacy, and security. Finally, transparency and accountability are crucial when AI is used in the world of work.

3. The considerations of the opportunities and risks of AI use in the world of work apply to workers at all stages of the global AI supply chain, including workers in the emerging economies and developing countries. AI's responsible and sustainable production, decent work and protection of the rights of AI supply chain workers, including those that label, review and refine data inputs used to train AI systems, should be promoted. It is important to foster cooperation with digital platform companies, technology companies, social partners, civil society and governments worldwide to ensure that companies are fulfilling their responsibility to workers in their AI supply chains. This responsibility entails the provision of meaningful, well compensated jobs where workers can exercise their fundamental labour rights, and report on potential violations of labour and employment rights.

4. Social dialogue across the development and deployment of AI as well as the development and implementation of policy responses can contribute to fully leveraging the potential and addressing risks of AI in labour markets and to supporting ethical and socially responsible uses of AI that improves workers' lives, positively augments human work, and helps all people to safely enjoy the gains and opportunities from technological innovation.

5. Acknowledging the need for future proof and resilient labour markets that leave no one behind, we, the G7 Labour and Employment Ministers, have developed the G7 Action Plan for a human-centered development and use of safe, secure, and trustworthy AI in the world of work. The Action Plan identifies policy options for G7 members to consider, building on the outcomes of the

Hiroshima AI Process, the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), the 2024 revision of the OECD Recommendation on AI (OECD AI Principles) and consistently with the UN General Assembly resolution on *Seizing the Opportunities of Safe, Secure and Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence Systems for Sustainable Development*, which urges all States, the private sector, civil society, research organizations and the media, to develop and support regulatory and governance approaches and frameworks related to safe, secure and trustworthy use of AI. We take note of the work done also by the G7 Digital & Technology track to develop the *Toolkit for AI in the Public Sector* that will help the public sector to translate principles for safe, secure, and trustworthy AI into practical measures, including by identifying the needed skills, competencies, and occupational profiles.

6. We will work to advance the G7 Action Plan in close cooperation with the private sector, workers' organisations, civil society, academia and other stakeholders. We ask the ILO and OECD to support us and to report back on our progress to the G7.

Fully leveraging the potential of AI in the labour market through skills development

The adoption of AI in the world of work is rapidly shifting skills needs, as it reshapes the task and skill composition of jobs. Specialised AI skills will be required in some cases, including skills needed to develop and maintain AI systems. But many workers will need basic digital and data science skills, as well as complementary soft skills to use and interact with AI applications. Adult learning systems – as well as formal education – will need to quickly adapt to these rapid transformations and ensure access to flexible, good-quality training to all workers, and notably low-skilled workers, older workers and workers in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Actions to consider in order to promote a human-centered development and use of safe, secure and trustworthy use of AI world of work include:

- Addressing skill mismatches, working closely with businesses to identify the labour market's gaps and needs to deliver more targeted training, including by using public and private employment services, and promoting quality apprenticeship and mid-career reskilling programs, especially focusing on SMEs.
- Using skills assessment and anticipation systems to identify future skills needs in the labour market, including through AI-based technologies.
- Facilitating access to inclusive and adequate reskilling and upskilling programmes, including specific AI micro-credentials for jobseekers and for workers' transitions within and between companies, tailored to the development of the skills needed to design, adopt, monitor and use human-centered trustworthy AI in the world of work, including by fostering public-private partnership and encouraging AI companies to provide skilling services together with the AI deployment.
- Leveraging AI-based technologies to improve education and lifelong learning opportunities, better plan and deliver training, personalise training content to individuals' needs, and to increase training participation and inclusiveness.
- Leveraging social dialogue and public-private partnerships to encourage training, reskilling and redeployment of workers if needed.
- Promoting awareness among workers and companies, including SMEs, of the impact of AI on organizations and support business' efforts in upskilling and reskilling managers and employees, including by considering guidelines on the skills needed to enable the adoption of AI in the workplaces.

Automation, productivity and fairness

AI, and in particular its latest developments with generative models, differs from previous automation technologies in several ways. It expands automation to non-routine cognitive tasks and, as a general-purpose technology, its use could be

widespread across several industries, sectors and occupations. AI can augment workers' productivity and capabilities and it can improve labour market opportunities for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable and marginalised groups, who, at the same time, could be more exposed to automation, widening labour market inequalities. Actions to consider in order to promote a human-centered development and use of safe, secure and trustworthy AI in the world of work include:

- Monitoring the impact of AI on the labour market, including potential disruptions and inequalities in exposure to AI-related opportunities and risks also relying on the support of ILO and OECD.
- Providing employment support measures for workers most exposed to AI related disruption and provide adequate social protection and retraining opportunities for workers in case of job displacement.
- Providing targeted support for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to develop knowledge-sharing platforms and explanatory toolboxes, while also supporting all employers to develop good practices.
- Encouraging companies to develop and deploy AI tools that are human-centered and have the potential to increase productivity, improve job quality, augment workers' capabilities, and alleviate labour shortages.
- Ensuring the protection of labour and human rights, including by supporting companies to take effective measures against potential human and labour rights' risks of abuse associated with the design, development and use of AI.
- Facilitating cooperation between advanced economies, emerging economies and developing countries to promote positive impacts of AI on the world of work globally, including for workers at all stages of the AI supply chain and for the just transition to a green economy.

Privacy and non-discrimination in the world of work

The growing integration of AI in the world of work will likely result in greater collection and analysis of data on workers and job applicants, raising concerns about privacy infringement, especially if consent is not properly obtained. Safe, secure and trustworthy AI can mitigate human bias and discrimination by informing decisions with quantitative evidence and promote and monitor progress with diversity and inclusion in the labour market. However, poorly designed or biased AI systems, trained on selective and insufficiently diverse data can amplify labour market biases, especially gender discriminations and biases against disadvantaged groups. Actions to consider in order to promote a human-centered development and use of safe, secure and trustworthy AI in the world of work include:

- Developing and adopting technical standards and/or best practices for risk and impact assessments, monitoring and testing for AI systems used in the world of work that affect worker's rights and safety. This includes for example AI systems used for recruitment or staff management.
- Fostering the enforcement of existing regulatory frameworks and standards on worker privacy and personal data protection, and against discrimination. Workers' data collected, used, or created by AI should be limited to legitimate scopes, and protected and handled responsibly. Regulatory frameworks may need to be adapted or developed if gaps are identified.
- Developing guidelines on promoting inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups when using AI for hiring and staff management.
- Encouraging gender equality, diversity and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups among AI developers, including those in leadership and decision-making positions, also through inclusive access to AI related educational and training pathways.

Occupational safety and health, autonomy, agency and dignity

The use of AI has the potential to improve measures to prevent work-related injuries and diseases in the workplace, for example by automating hazardous tasks and the use of safety equipment to monitor fatigue levels and other safety risks. AI can also be a tool for mitigating the consequences of ageing societies and promoting inclusion in the workplace, by, for example, expanding the range of skills of employees through assistance systems or compensating for disabilities. Challenges may nonetheless arise for occupational safety and health (OSH). AI-powered monitoring systems may increase performance time pressures and stress, while non-transparent decision-making processes and the disappearance of routine tasks could further exacerbate worker strain and pose psychosocial risks to workers, as routine tasks provide workers with some respite from their more mentally taxing tasks. For some workers, the adoption of AI to streamline production and boost efficiency can come at the expense of worker autonomy and dignity. Algorithmic management practices could unduly restrict workers' autonomy and diminish opportunities for human interaction, posing risks to workers' mental health. It could also lead to a shift in management and power relations within the workplace, for example if used for monitoring and predictive analytics. The impact of using AI in combination with other technologies, especially physical systems, such as robots, or autonomous vehicles, can bring both benefits and risks for physical health and safety, which should also be considered. Actions to consider in order to promote a human-centered development and use of safe, secure and trustworthy AI in the world of work include:

- Encouraging the meaningful involvement of employers, workers and workers' organisations in the deployment of AI systems and AI-driven decision-making processes and safeguard balanced power relations in the workplace.
- Ensuring the enforcement of existing labour law and of occupational safety and health standards, and that they take into account the occupational safety

and the physical and mental health dimension, as well as risks of gender-based violence and harassment. If necessary, consider adopting complementary standards.

- Strengthening labour authorities' capacity to supervise and enforce compliance with the law, namely through effective sanctions and sanctioning procedures for non-compliance.
- Monitoring the impact of AI on occupational safety and health, including by promoting adequate risks and impact assessments, audits and certifications for AI systems that include safety and health and considering penalties for non-compliance.

Transparency, explainability and accountability

The adoption of AI in the world of work raises challenges for employers', workers' and jobseekers' ability to understand AI decision-making processes, their ability to provide informed consent to the use of AI, and their ability to seek compensation in case mistakes are made in the AI decision-making process. Non-transparent AI decision making and unclear accountability in the development and use of AI poses challenges to regulatory enforcement. It is important to provide for appropriate human oversight of AI-based decisions and arrangements for recourse for workers' complaints of bias and other violations in the world of work. Employers should retain the responsibility for decisions affecting employment relations, also when made by AI systems. Actions to consider in order to promote a human-centered development and use of safe, secure and trustworthy AI in the world of work include:

- Encouraging employers to adopt AI systems for which transparency reports, instructions of use, and relevant technical documentation as well as explanatory tools are available.

- Encouraging employers to disclose to workers the use of AI systems in the workplace and in hiring processes to jobseekers, and to provide explanatory information upon the request of jobseekers and workers or their representatives.
- Promoting risk-based human oversight of AI systems that affect workers' safety, rights, privacy and career opportunities, with clarifications of the responsibilities, and how to seek redress.
- Developing guidelines for employers – and support to MSMEs – on ethical oversight, company level risk and social impact assessment and compliance with accountability measures applicable to the use of AI in the workplace, with meaningful involvement of workers and their representatives. Promoting innovative channels where workers, employers and their representatives can exchange information on the use AI in the world of work.

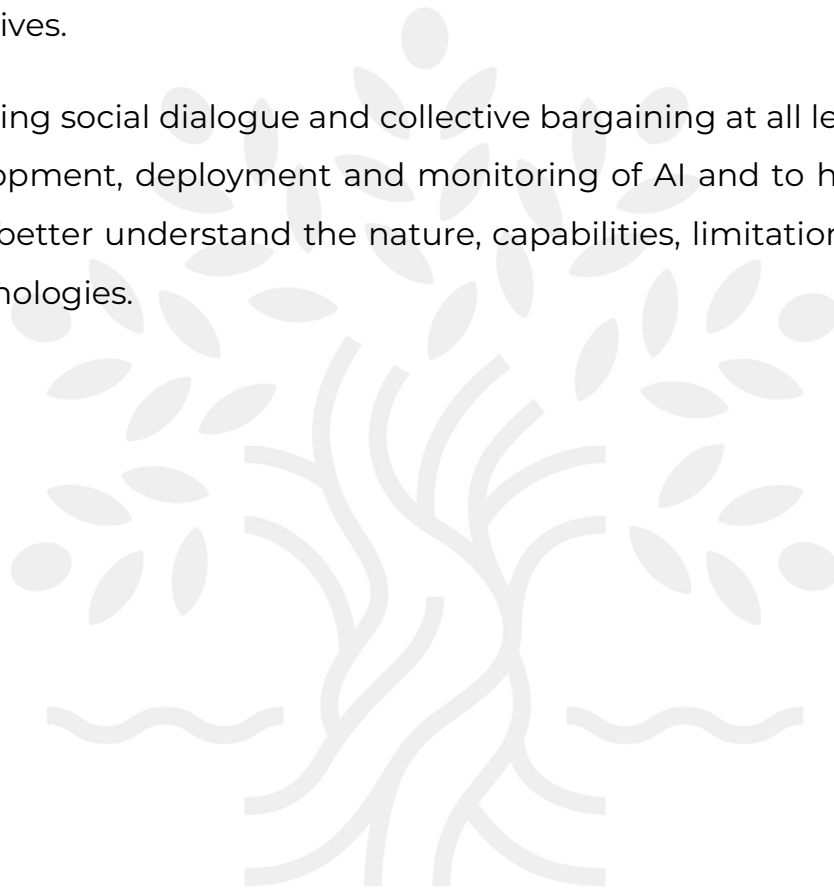
Social dialogue

Social dialogue can help ensure human-centered development and use of safe, secure and trustworthy AI in the world of work. Evidence¹ shows that the outcomes of AI for workers are more positive in firms that consult workers and their representatives in the adoption of AI. When employers have access to more data than necessary about workers, there is a risk that information asymmetries are exacerbated, especially when workers are not aware that they are interacting with AI, or not sufficiently informed about the outcomes of this interaction. There is also a risk that data collected through AI is used to limit workers' right to organise. In many instances, businesses may use AI technologies to enhance enterprise operations and outcomes. Early and meaningful engagement with social partners will not only help achieve these businesses objectives, but also identify and mitigate negative consequences. We recognize that social dialogue is an important process for achieving twin goals of harnessing the potential of

¹ Lane, M., M. Williams and S. Broecke (2023), "The impact of AI on the workplace: Main findings from the OECD AI surveys of employers and workers", OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 288, OECD Publishing, Paris

new technologies and advancing worker protections and job quality. Actions to consider in order to promote a human-centered development and use of safe, secure and trustworthy AI in the world of work include:

- Promoting the active involvement and consultation of workers and workers' organisations in the adoption of AI systems in the workplace.
- Supporting the development of AI-related expertise and skills among social partners. Engaging social partners in the delivery of training for AI and digital literacy initiatives.
- Promoting social dialogue and collective bargaining at all levels, including on the development, deployment and monitoring of AI and to help employers and workers better understand the nature, capabilities, limitations, and impact of these technologies.



Annex 2

G7 policy principles for a resilient world of work in ageing societies and Action Plan for improving working conditions in the care sector

Active and healthy ageing

In order to address the labour markets challenges linked to ageing populations, we will continue to support active and healthy ageing and extended working careers, promoting decent work, longer working lives, including with the view of fostering the intergenerational sharing of skills, building on the *OECD Council's Recommendation on Ageing and Employment Policies*. To this end we will consider:

- Promoting healthy and decent working lives for older workers, by: ensuring decent work; boosting flexible working arrangements; and ensuring access to adequate social protection for all workers, irrespective of their age, health conditions, abilities and employment status.
- Encouraging employers to retain and manage an age-inclusive workforce, by: reviewing pay setting practices to reflect productivity and competences; ensuring reasonable workplace accommodations in line with workers' need as they age; addressing age discrimination; and encouraging good practices in managing an age-diverse workforce.
- Facilitating career mobility and employability throughout working lives, by: raising access to lifelong learning and skills recognition, especially for low-skilled and older workers; providing effective employment assistance for mid-career and older workers; improving career and retirement planning; supporting entrepreneurship opportunities, work experience and job rotation schemes for

older adults; supporting good working conditions and job quality for older workers, especially those with long-term health issues, including chronic illness.

Action Plan for improving working conditions in the care sector

Access to affordable and high-quality care

1. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic and social challenges have underscored the importance of the care economy, whilst revealing its vulnerabilities. Ensuring access to affordable and high-quality care is central to building resilient labour markets in the context of ageing populations. Societies and economies rely heavily on both paid and unpaid care work to function effectively, supporting human, social, and economic development. Paid care work has the potential to be an important source of employment, as well as to support labour market (re)entry, retention, and progression of workers with family responsibilities. Yet, current challenges in care work, including deficits in the quality of jobs, risk creating gaps in the availability of affordable high-quality care services and exacerbating labour shortages within and beyond the care sector, affect the functioning of labour markets, and further increase gender inequalities in the world of work.

2. Acknowledging the full potential of the care sector, we, the G7 Labour and Employment Ministers, agree on a G7 Action Plan for the improvement of working conditions in the care sector in the context of an ageing population. The Action Plan helps identify the key policy actions, guided by the *ILO 5R Framework for Decent Care Work*²: recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work; reward paid care work, by promoting more and decent work for care workers; and guarantee care workers' right to representation, social dialogue and collective bargaining. The Action Plan is based on the principles that good-quality

² Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work. ILO, Resolution and conclusions concerning decent work and the care economy, International Labour Conference, 112nd Session, 2024

care benefits both care providers and recipients and society as a whole and requires decent work for care workers.

3. We are committed to implement the Action Plan in close cooperation with social partners and engaging the private sector.

Demographic change, care policies and services

Global demographic changes directly influence both the demand for care and the available labour supply. As the population ages, there is a growing need for long-term care planning, emphasizing the importance of social protection policies that support healthy and active aging and ensure access to long-term care for older individuals.

Long-term care services are essential both to ensure the ability of older persons to age with health and dignity, as well as to enable all workers with care responsibilities to reconcile work and family life and to exercise their right to work without discrimination. They are an essential piece of the continuum of care policies and services over the life course, which includes childcare services and care leave policies, and supports workers through major life-work transitions such as education-to-work, parenthood, working life to retirement.³

Decent work for care workers leads to better quality care and retention of care workers

Attracting and retaining a skilled care workforce, capable of meeting the care needs of now and the future and building resilience into labour markets is urgent. The care sector is, however, often characterized by persistent workforce challenges, such as labour and skill shortages that can often be attributed to poor working conditions, informal working arrangements, low wages, excessive working hours and insufficient access to training, among others. The care sector is also affected by specific discriminatory patterns based on gender and other

³ Ibid.

factors such as race, socio-economic and migration status. These often result in exposure to gender-based violence and harassment, wage gaps, and vertical and horizontal occupational segregation.

Actions to consider in order to address decent work deficits in the care sector, improve its attractiveness, and improve the quality and availability of care services include:

- Investing in the care sector to reduce unpaid care work, stimulate quality employment, address labour shortages and build a resilient care sector.
- Promoting recruitment in the long-term care sector and campaigns to improve the image of the sector and challenge gendered care models.
- Respecting, promoting and realising the right to freedom of association for all care workers.
- Promoting social dialogue for setting working conditions and ensuring the right to collective bargaining in care sectors.
- Promoting the right to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value in care occupations and ensure enforcement of existing regulatory frameworks on pay discrimination on the grounds of sex or gender and support broader wage improvements to make the sector more attractive.
- Securing the right to a safe and healthy working environment free from violence and harassment.
- Tackling informal care work and the specific situation of live-in caregivers, by reviewing existing policies that may hinder their participation in the formal economy, introducing incentives for its formalisation and strengthening social protection and social security.
- Promoting equal opportunities for men and women in care jobs, including in all levels of management and senior positions in care occupations.

- Fostering policies that recognize the rights of migrant workers in the care economy and working with countries of origin to promote fair and ethical recruitment, in line with the *ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment*.
- Promoting international recruitment practices in accordance with the *WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel* for the mutual benefit of countries of origin, destination and health workers.
- Ensuring the availability of lifelong learning, flexible education, vocational training and training systems that can build, and anticipate the skills required for care workers in the labour market and promoting validation and recognition of skills and prior learning.
- Making use of appropriate technology to increase the accessibility and quality of care and allow workers to make a better use of their care time.
- Increasing awareness of the value of paid and unpaid care work to society and the economy.

Supporting workers with care responsibilities

Care policies encompass the direct provision of childcare, eldercare and care and support services for persons with disabilities. This also includes care-related social protection transfers and benefits given to workers with family or care responsibilities, including care workers, unpaid carers or people who need care. They include labour regulations, such as leave policies and other family-friendly working arrangements, which enable a better balance between paid employment and unpaid care work.⁴

⁴ Ibid.

Actions to consider to ensure the right mix of care leave policies capable of supporting workers with care responsibilities and increasing women's labour force participation, include:

- Implementing a life course approach to care including care leave in the form of maternity, paternity and parental leave, quality early childhood education and care, care leave and services that enable workers to care for dependants in need of long-term care, and family-friendly working arrangements.
- Promoting labour market policies that support the entry, reintegration and progress of unpaid carers, who are mainly women, into the labour force.
- Promoting the validation and recognition of prior learning for those carers who had left the labour market.
- Ensuring universal access to affordable quality care services.
- Ensuring care-friendly and gender-transformative social protection systems.

We support the development of internationally agreed statistical standards as the basis for the collection of detailed, comparable and harmonized data on the care economy. The ILO and OECD will promote inclusive and gender-responsive collection and dissemination of comprehensive data on care work to support evidence-based policy-making that promotes decent work among care workers.